THE DEMOCRAT.

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VERSAILLES, MISSOURI.

MY RIVER.

Did yeh ever own a river?
Yeh kin bet yer life I did!
One that snuck I'm under kiver
Of the cresses an' 'at slid
Sassy like an' with a giggle
Out ter where the sunshine fell
'Gainst a rock, then give a wriggle
An' a gurgly sort o' yell
An' went down the rapids, tumblin'!
An' a-th'owin' back each gleam!
Jest like solid sunshine crumblin'
On the surface of a dream!
Then it laid in quiet puddles
Where the cattle stood an' drank,
Then, the where the alders huddles,
It jest snuggled to the bank,
In a pool plum deep an' darkin'
Inter little gleams begat
By the sun a-lenkin' sparkin'
Thoo where maple leaves was at!

An' wherever it was goin'
It went plungin' right along,
Never stoppin' but just th'owin'
Backward in a sort o' song
All the story of its hopin',
All of what its creek-hood knew,
Wide green medders gently slopin'
Inked banks all wet with dew!
An' high banks all fringed with clover
An' low banks where willows swish,
An' where sycamores leans over
There's a dandy place to fish!
An' it glidders inter hollows
An' in rapids wet with spray,
An' in wide an' quiet shallows
Where the cows wade out an' lay!
Do yeh wonder I git dreamin'
Of the boyhood I have known,
An' a-longin' for the gleamin'
Of that river all my own?
—J. M. Lewis, in Houston Post.

The Bird O' Paradise.

By Grace MacGowan Cooke.

MACE TALLENT turned his head painfully and looked through the one small window. He had been most unkindly placed, so that the effort to do this made his bonds cut into the flesh; but when your mortal foe has bound you hand and foot and left you in a blockaded still, while he goes down to "the settlement" to show himself, so that when he later murders you, with all sorts of recondite tortures, there may be an alibi ready prepared; when all this is the case, the difficulty you may have in looking through a two-by-three-foot window, and even the galling of bonds which threaten to break through the skin, are mere details in your menu of suffering.

It was intolerably hot in the little shack, even up there among the balsams, in the deep glen which held the illicit still, for before Fain Bushares left he had fastened the window down tight. Mace thought of Hester Bushares, Fain's sister, whom he had expected to marry this month. The cabin was done, the preacher bespoke, and they were to have wed, as the mountain phrase goes, at the next quarterly, now near at hand. He believed in his soul that this was the cause of Fain's rancor against him. The reason given by his tormentor when he made those bonds secure was that he, Mace, was a spy and informer, planning to lead the revenuers to Sutton's still, in which he now lay bound, awaiting his death. He had been brought to the place by a message purporting to come from Hester—suddenly he wondered if Hester was in the plot. He had thought he heard her voice as he neared the shack that morning—or had she perhaps been decoyed there in the same manner by a false message from himself? (They often met in this way, since the Bushares were opposed to the marriage).

Fain had said when he told Mace what fate awaited him that he would have Hester there to see her sweetheart killed—he had made no statement as to whether or no she would come willingly to the spectacle.

Mace imagined that he could hear in the solemn silence the noise of the crowd far below him at the settlement, where a celebration was going on. All at once he became aware that what he had taken for this sound was a swooping, scraping noise on the roof of the shack; and as he painfully strained his gaze toward the window a man's head appeared there, an arm reached down from above, and somebody called cheerfully, "Hullo! Air ye all dead in there?"

Mace smiled grimly to think how near this was the truth. Fain had not thought worth while to gag him, since, in that lonely place, he might have yelled himself hoarse and none been the wiser. "Naw," he called, "not adzactly dead—just snoozin'. Come in, stranger—how'd ye get on the roof?"

The new-comer finally made entrance through the window by prying it open with his clasp knife and dropping in from the eaves. He was a lean, dapper fellow, with a shrewd, kindly face. He looked Mace over curiously. "Usually sleep that way?" he queried finally.

"Not gin'rally," Mace answered him, "hit's a new plan I hen tryin' lately—and I don't like it. Ease me up a leetle, will ye, and we'll talk it over." He was still associating this man with Fain Bushares, still full of suspicion that this was a trick of Fain's to prolong his torture.

The new-comer skillfully unraveled the knots at Mace's wrists and Mace, sitting up, had leisure to observe how strangely his visitor was dressed. His hair was of a smooth drab, plastered down in a scallop upon his forehead like that of the typical country beau; its sleek oiliness had in a measure resisted even the disarranging effect of his hanging head downward and scrambling through the window. His collar, high, smooth and very white, suggested a strip of celluloid (probably it was of that variety); his tie was flamboyant; his black coat, somewhat worn and frayed, was a Prince Albert, and he wore it with a buff Marseilles vest. The seemliness of this attire terminated abruptly in what Mace at first took to be a pair of long, slim, bare legs, and what he now saw to be somewhat soiled flesh ings.

The two men stared at each other; the peril of Tallent's position well nigh faded from his mind in the wonder of this apparition. "Wall, I'll be jiggered!" he ejaculated finally. "Is that the way you usually dress for company?"

The raking, swooping sound now once more attacked the roof. "My name's Hubbard," the visitor replied rather at random. "That's the Bird o' Paradise you hear on the roof. Got a good, sharp ax handy? I want to straighten out her riggin'."

Mace gaped upon him with fallen jaw. A man who wore stockings as long as that, and had tied a bird of paradise to the roof, was so crazy a happening that Tallent began to believe his wits were going, and that he had invented the whole matter.

Suddenly the window darkened, and a big, creamy curtain seemed to descend outside of it. "Lord a mighty! is the skies a-fallin'?" Mace roared.

Then, upon their ears burst most unmelodious howls, coming apparently from the roof above.

"Ez that your bird—a—your bird o' paradise?" Mace inquired.

Hubbard arose with great alacrity. "It's the preacher I brought with me. I forgot him. He's hitched in the ropes, and when the balloon careens it's likely to rake him over the shingles some. Get me that hatchet, will you? And would you please come and help me get him loose?" It was plain that whatever the oddity of Mace's predicament, it could extort but wavering attention from one whose own affairs were in such pressing disorder. A balloon. The matter began to unravel itself before Mace. To this mountain man there was nothing strange in having a prospective brother-in-law suddenly turn assassin; but the manner of this which began to present itself as deliverance, was indeed wildly absurd.

"Name's Hubbard, as I told you. Was making an ascent down there at Garyville. Balloon got away with me before I was ready—me and the preacher. We was to have brought up a couple with us and married 'em 'one thousand feet in air.'" He jerked out the sentences as the two men climbed to the roof.

The preacher, who was of the mountain variety, was not resigning himself to death without effort. He had his pocket knife out and was hacking valiantly at the ropes, whenever he could reach one. Hubbard sprang upon him almost savagely. "Hold on there, my dear sir," he remonstrated. "I'll cut the right ones."

"Any rope that's holdin' me is the right one to cut," the Reverend Zeb Pusey asserted with emphasis.

"Do you know Fain Bushares?" Mace inquired, abruptly, as the two men worked at the ropes.

"Haven't the pleasure of the gentleman's acquaintance—but should be glad of the opportunity, if he's a friend o' yourn," returned the aeronaut, blandly, as he struggled with the big, bulging captive and its netting of ropes.

"Say, look here, is this thing a-goin' to rise up when we git her cut a-loose?" Mace inquired.

"Why, I think it will—I hope it will. My notion is to make the ascension from here, if the gear can be disentangled, and drop down in or near Garyville. That will satisfy the crowd, I hope, even if we haven't a couple to marry!"

A couple to marry! Ideas were coming fast to Mace; a plan so brilliant that it seemed too good to be true was instantly born in his brain.

"They's a couple here in this here shanty," he suggested, "that's mighty wishful to be wed, and likewise mighty wishful o' gettin' out o' these diggin's. Fain Bushares, the gent you said you hadn't met, is after the man, with a gun—the gal's Fain's sister. Fain, he's down to Garyville now. Ef so be you can take me and my gal down there—an' keep out o' rifle range—we'd be mighty proud to go."

Four people and the balloon somewhat damaged. Hubbard looked doubtful.

"If I could get some smoke—or hot air—say, 15 minutes filling up would make her sail like a bird."

"What's the matter with this?" Mace inquired, pointing to the great chimney of the still. "I can make you a fire o' balsam chips in that there furnace downstairs that'll send out all the smoke you'll want."

The Reverend Zeb was on his feet now. "I don't go up in no more balloons to-day," he remarked, as he slid over the roof's edge. But his assertion proved to be an error. He was in a minority. Mace desired to be married; Hubbard was determined to give the crowd below at the settlement the spectacle for which their money had been paid; and he was outvoted, outfaced, over-persuaded—fairly hustled into more adventure.

After Hester Bushares had been found, fastened in a lower room of the stillhouse, the Bird of Paradise fed full of balsam smoke, the gear and rigging righted, four people settled themselves in the car and the great, egg-shaped, yellow monster, true to the bidding of her strangely attired master, rose majestically from the mountain top.

There was a light westerly breeze. Garyville nestles just to the east of Big Turkey Track mountain. Its tiny houses, like toy boxes; its race course, like a lamp mat, became visible almost immediately. There were moments of intense anxiety, when it seemed impossible that they should go near enough to be more than seen.

"Lord a' mighty!" groaned Mace in an agony of impatience. "Looks like this is the biggest fool contraption ever made by man. Ef a feller had a bit in its mouth, or a paddle to steer with, even—but to set up here an' let the wind blow ye—"

"Easy, my friend," counseled Hubbard. "Speak well o' the bridge that carries you safe over. The Bird o' Paradise, she's a-goin' like a dove to the ark. I believe you'd rather be here than back in your recent quarters?"

Mace looked in Hester's eyes and agreed that he was an ungrateful dog.

Hubbard laid aside coat, vest, tie and what proved to be a false shirt front, ceremoniously called a dickey, and appeared glorious in tarnished spangles about neck and breast.

Hester gazed upon him with wide, awe-filled eyes. It was the experience of a lifetime, something to tell to her children and grandchildren, to be so near a "showman." And the presence of Mace robbed it of all impropriety—that ever present bugbear of rustic femininity.

Mace had a happy inspiration. "Say, look hyer, let Mr. Pusey marry us right now—we hain't goin' to git to Garyville in this thing," he pleaded.

"Yes, we are," Hubbard returned, staring intently down, his hand on the valve rope. "By George! I wouldn't have believed it! We've struck a current that's going to carry us right smack over the fair grounds."

It was true; the race track, crowd, booths and stalls, were almost directly below them, and lay in their line of advance. Hubbard began to descend.

The shouting of the crowd could now be heard, the crowd itself was visible, and disentangled itself into individuals, like rats running about an ant heap.

Hester clung in silence to her lover's arm. She was dressed in all the finery a mountain belle could command, for she had expected to go to the celebration at Garyville—indeed, she was going to it now, and to her own wedding as well. "You reckon Fain's down there?" she inquired finally, looking at the ant hill and the ants. It was very difficult to be afraid of a brother at such long range, and when your uninterrupted view was permitted to reduce him to such contemptible dimensions.

The balloon, however, was now so much lower that people began to look like people, though strangely foreshortened and distorted. Hester, Mace and Brother Pusey gazed fascinated, and no wonder; for, from this height, a man directly below presented himself as a hat moving along upon the ground, from which were thrust a pair of feet, and beside which two short arms waggled.

Hubbard undid a package of hand bills, and all four joined in throwing them out. The aeronaut, knowing nothing of mountain people and mountain ways, failed to appreciate the danger in which not only his passengers but his beloved balloon might be from Bushares' rifle. The Reverend Zeb, however, touched his sleeve, cautioning, "Better not git down too close. Fain Bushares is a good shot; but the way this here thing wobbles, he's mighty apt to miss Mace an' hit you or me."

"How far will a rifle ball carry?" Hubbard inquired in some alarm.

"I sh'd think he mought hit a man at 600 or 800 yards; but this old balloon is a fa'r mark—looks like he mought hit it's far's e'd see it. That ol' Winchester o' his'n 'll kerry a plump mile."

"I don't want the Bird o' Paradise shot into, of course," Hubbard said, "but a rifle ball wouldn't make hole enough to do us much damage. I'll keep 300 or 400 feet above the crowd; but I ort to get where I can holler to 'em, and tell 'em that the marryin' is goin' on. I'll go down close first—won't do any harm till the man recognizes you folks—maybe he ain't there anyhow."

They could hear the popping of firecrackers now, the band playing away for dear life, and the hoarse, delighted shouts of the people below them. As the last handbill went over the edge of the car Hubbard took out the big tin horn of the spieler.

"The wedding is now taking place," he roared. "1,000 feet in a-a-air!" This latter was simply a rhetorical flourish, but it pleased the crowd, which roared again.

"Join your right hands," Hubbard prompted irritably, turning from his horn. "Stand up before the preacher, and join your right hands."

Nothing loath, the young people did so. During the arrangement of the wedding scene the balloon had descended perilously close to the settlement. Suddenly the bride—it is always the woman who has her wits about her at such times—saw a man run a little away from those about him, pick up a rifle and bring it to his shoulder. "It's Fain," she cried. "He's saw us and knows us. Oh, please, Mr. Balloon man, make it go up quick."

The frightened Hubbard heaved overboard most of his sand; and so close was he above the heads of the gaping crowd that the sand descended upon them in a cloud. The balloon shot upward, leaving a choking, sputtering group below—and it was nearly 'a thousand feet in air' that Mace Tallent and Hester Bushares were married.

They could see other atomies run to Fain and disarm him; before they got too far away they could even hear the laughter with which this unexpected turn was received.

Hubbard radiated satisfaction. "I'll let that's the most successful ascent I ever made," he remarked. "I never seen a crowd so tickled."

"You could drap us wherever you choose now," the happy bridegroom suggested. "The boys has got a-hold of Fain, an' we're all right."

"I reckon," mused the Reverend Pusey, whose good humor was quite restored, "that these young friends o' yourn will be waitin' you to change the name o' your balloon from the Bird o' Paradise to th' Gyardeen Angel."

And four people, 'one thousand feet in air,' laughed together as they settled gracefully toward Polk's Station, and the railway which was to carry Mace and Hester Tallent to safety, and indirectly to the little waiting cabin on the mountain side.

"Honey," whispered Mace, as he surreptitiously possessed himself of Hester's hand, "we had the biggest crowd to our weddin' ever saw at ary weddin' in all the Little Turkey Track neighborhood."

Hester smiled, and seeing preacher and aeronaut absorbed in some matter they were discussing, shyly nestled her cheek against her husband's arm. The contrast between the state of things at this moment and that prevailing at ten o'clock that morning was a pleasing one.

"And when chariots descend out o' Heaven—bringin' preacher and all—to tote us up to be wed in the middle o' the sky," concluded Mace, "looks like we must be purty considerable somepin o' folks."—National Magazine.

A Distance Dancer.

William Kemp, an English comic actor who flourished during the last years of Queen Elizabeth, and who belonged to the same company as Shakespeare, and "created" Dogberry, danced from London to Norwich, a distance of 111 miles. He was accompanied by a servant, an umpire and a man with a tabor and pipe. Crowds hindered his start on February 11, 1600, and many met him at every place. Several tried to dance with him, but none could rival his pace; the most successful were women. Although delayed by a snowstorm, he did it in nine days, and on the way accepted a challenge or two, each time coming off best, except when a Chelmsford maiden of 14 danced till he was "ready to lie down." On his return he wrote an account of it, which ends with a warning to those with whom he had made wagers that if they did not pay up he would publish their names. The "Nine Daies' Wonder," as the title runs, is a merry, readable pamphlet. Among other curious information in it is the statement that the customary way to deal with pickpockets at the theater in those days was to tie them to a post.

Wanted to Warn Him.

One day Sir Algernon West, a well-known member of parliament from London, was observed by one of the doorkeepers talking to a gentleman who had a rasping, raucous voice and a demonstrative, excited manner. While the conversation was in progress Sir Algernon received the card of another member of parliament and an intimation that its owner wished to see him. "Sorry; I'm engaged," was the answer. Next moment up came another card from a well-known peer. Again an apology was returned. In another minute the doorkeeper came carrying a huge card and saying that the lord mayor and sheriffs of London wished very urgently to see Sir Algernon. The latter excused himself from the gentleman with whom he was conversing; this was too important to resist. "There ain't nobody here," whispered the doorkeeper when he got the member outside, "only I was afraid a madman had been shown in to you by mistake and I wanted to warn you."

THE SOLEMNITY OF SLEEP.

Filipinos Are Very Reluctant to Awaken a Person Even When Ordered to Do So.

"There is one thing about life in the Philippines that a lazy man finds agreeable, if he is not in the army," said a retired soldier, to a New York Times man, "and that is the way in which he is allowed to sleep at all times and in all places undisturbed. The Tired Tims of the great race of tramps would find the islands a Paradise in this respect.

"One of the rudest acts in the estimation of the native is to step over a sleeping person, or in any way interfere with his repose. Sleeping, with them, is a very important matter, and is invested with solemnity, almost. They are strongly averse to waking a sleeper, as they hold the idea that during sleep the soul is absent from the body, and if they suddenly call you from sleep the soul may not have time to return to its tenement, the body. There are blood-curdling legends of men who have revenged themselves upon their enemies by thus exiling their souls.

"If you would call upon a native and you are told that he is asleep, you may as well go about your other business, for you will not get to him until, at his own good time, he awakens.

"When you go to sleep, in order to get a servant to arouse you at a certain time, you must give him the strictest orders to that effect before you turn in. Then, if he obeys you at all, he will stand by your side and whisper: 'Senor! Senor!' repeating the word a little louder each time until you are half awake, when he will go back to the low note, and again gradually raise his voice until you are fully conscious. It is an ideal way in which to be called from sleep, if you are in no hurry, and a man should never be in a hurry in the Philippines; the climate is not adapted to activity. But it surely is a great place to sleep."

THE CARRYING OF ARMS.

Privilege Will Be Granted in the Philippines Under Certain Conditions.

Civilians in the Philippines have the privilege of carrying arms under certain conditions, says the Washington Star. Under a law enacted by the Philippine commission, the civil governor, the chief of constabulary, the governors of the provinces and the inspectors of constabulary may authorize, in writing "any resident of the province to purchase or receive a gun or revolver, or both, when satisfied that the person so purchasing, receiving and having custody of the gun or revolver needs it for his reasonable protection or will use it for hunting or other lawful purposes only." It is provided, further, that "any person not connected with the army or navy of the United States, or otherwise authorized by law, having in his custody a gun or revolver or other firearm, or ammunition for the same, who shall not have the license under this section provided, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding $1,000 and imprisonment not exceeding one year and one day."

In order to prevent unauthorized possession of firearms by civilian employes of the army under color of the authority derived from the act in question, the commanding general of the division of the Philippines has issued a general order on the subject, in which he says that commanding officers of stations will issue permits for definite periods to such teamsters or other civilian employes to whom such arms are absolutely essential in the performance of military duty.

For the Yachting Girl.

Blue for dresses from time immemorial has been devoted to the sea. But red is much worn now and is becoming to a blonde. A brunette looks better in blue. The shade of red is known as sea red, and is warranted to resist sun, wind and salt water and keep its depth and brilliancy of hue. A white vest should be worn with a red gown to soften it. The little yachting cap may be all white. Duck, next to flannel, is the best material for a sea-going dress.

Different Views.

Longly—There's nothing in all the world equal to the friendship of a woman you can trust.

Shortun—Oh, I don't know. What's the matter with the friendship of a man who will trust you a few dollars' worth occasionally?—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Poor Consolation.

Fred—I'm in love with Miss Upperten, but haven't the nerve to propose.

Joe—You're in luck, old man.

Fred—In luck, why, how's that?

Joe—You'll never know how humiliating it is to be turned down.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Permanently Affected.

Rinks—Were you ever in an automobile accident?

Jinks—Well, I should say! My wife accepted me in an automobile.—Baltimore American.

Waiting for Inspection.

Hostess—Anything wrong, Mr. Blockedd? You have not opened your mouth this evening.

Blockedd—Oh, you just wait until refreshments are served.—N. Y. Herald.